Iowa Statewide Interoperable Communications System (ISICS)
Standards, Protocols, Procedures

Standard Name:	ISICS Regional & Statewide Interoperability Talkgroups		Date Created:		04-17-2018	
Standard Policy #	1.5.0	Section Title:	Interoperability Standards		Status	DRAFT
Approval Authority:	ISICSB		Adopted:	05-10-2018	Reviewed:	

1. Purpose or Objective

The purpose of this standard is to establish policy and procedures for use of ISICS regional and statewide interoperable talkgroups in all user radios. The regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups are a resource intended to facilitate communications among and between different agencies and service branches which need to coordinate their operations during major incidents, pre-planned events, and task force operations. These resources are not intended for localized day-to-day interoperability when a more appropriate resource may be available.

This policy will provide standardized incident response radio communications capabilities for all service branches and, most importantly, will support the redeployment of mutual aid resources throughout the state. This policy will provide the radio communications structure necessary to enable effective situational awareness, command and control, and resource coordination in support of the incident command and management structure specified under the National Incident Management System (NIMS). This policy will also serve to minimize usage conflicts when regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups are needed for multiple incidents.

2. Technical Background

Capabilities

ISICS regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups provides a high level of interoperability for public safety and public service users respectively. Other effective levels of interoperability include switching to shared conventional frequencies, dispatch console patches,

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deployable portable gateways, and radio caches (swap radios).

Constraints
The availability of and the use of the regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups must be easily understood by radio user personnel, who are primarily concerned with their mission and not with the operation of complex radios under stressful conditions. Standardization of capabilities will provide responding agencies with an assurance that they will have operational compatibility with any other agency they need to work with.

3. Operational Context

Universal access to the six (6) non-encrypted talkgroups for each region and statewide zone by all end-users and communication centers. Encryption is supported by the ISICS platform, however, implementation and use is under consideration. Any future encryption on interoperable talkgroups will be Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) 256. APCO Project 25 (P25) 700 / 800 MHz AES 256 equipped radios and communication centers guarantees fully compatible, interoperable communications among agencies and service branches for major incidents, pre-planned events, and task force operations.

4. Standardized Policy

ISICS INTEROPERABILITY TALKGROUPS

Talkgroup Requirements	For Whom?
Required	All ISICS Users – All Radios – All communication centers (All regional and statewide interoperable talkgroups)
Recommended	N/A
Optional	Site Access - Sub Regional
Not Allowed	N/A
Site Access - Statewide	System Wide – All Sites
Site Access - Regional	Regional Sites + One

Cross Patch Standard	Approval Needed	To Talk Groups
Temporary Patch	No	As Needed
Permanent Patch	Yes	

Primary Intended Use
ISICS Regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups, when feasible, should be considered as the primary resource for mutual aid incidents involving joint response from multiple agencies and/or service branches that operate in different service areas, jurisdictions or levels of government. Some smaller or more localized incidents may warrant the use of a regional or statewide interoperability talkgroup if no other common or interoperable resources are available at the time of the incident.

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Incident Scope and Geographic Area

The regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups are available for use in incidents anywhere ISICS provides geographic coverage, regardless of incident size or scale. Interoperability incidents may be localized or dispersed in area. Participating incident personnel and resources may be localized, regional, statewide, or national. Incidents may be pre-planned or emergent in nature.

Non-intended Use

The statewide talkgroups are not to be used for daily routine operations.

Priorities for Use and Multiple Incidents

In the event that multiple interoperability incidents occur simultaneously, exhausting the regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups, assignment of regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups in incident radio communications plans will be prioritized for: (1) mutual aid incidents, and (2) those incidents involving resources spanning multiple regions. Secondary use and localized or single region mutual aid incidents initially assigned to statewide interoperability talkgroups should be reassigned to regional talkgroups. This reassignment will be coordinated between the affected incident commanders and dispatch centers controlling the incidents.

Console Resource Requirements and Patching

Integrated ISICS dispatch consoles shall have the regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups in the console configuration available for patching. Regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups should not be patched to other regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups. In order to meet the communications needs for an event, the regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups may be patched to:

- Conventional radio frequency (RF) resources, such as VHF, UHF, etc.
- Private agency talkgroups, such as dispatch mains, tactical talkgroups, pools, etc.
- Regional or local tactical talkgroups (TACs), although this would not be preferred as a method of resolving communications needs because it reduces the number of talkgroups available for an incident.

Assignment Tracking

Use of the NIMS/ ICS-205 Incident Radio Communications Plan format is highly recommended to assist with assignment tracking for pre-planned incidents, incidents utilizing more than one of the statewide talkgroups, and for incidents of long duration.

Multi-Group Prohibition

Regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups shall not be part of any announcement or other pre-programmed multi-group.

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5. __Standardized Procedure__

Notification
If the StatusBoard is unavailable, contact a communication center with access to the StatusBoard to reserve a talkgroup.

Order of Use
The usage of regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups for Preplanned Non- Emergency interoperability events should use the highest numbered talkgroup and descend.

The usage of regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups for Unplanned Emergency Incidents use the lowest numbered talkgroup and ascend.

Training Exercises
Preplanned use of regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups for training should be encouraged.

Unit Identification
When operating on the regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups, users should initially identify using plain English as described in ISICS Standard 1.3.0.

Use of 10-Codes and Acronyms
The use of 10-codes, signals, unique acronyms, and other codes should not be used on the regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups, because there is no standardized set of codes. Plain language should be used in all cases.

Termination of Use
At the end of the event, the initiating dispatch center will remove any patches that were placed for the event, if any, and clear the StatusBoard so other communications centers will know this resource is available for use.

6. __Management__

Communications Center Managers and Supervisors for agencies on the ISICS platform, Incident Commanders, and Communications Unit Leaders (COML) shall ensure that the policy and procedure for usage and assignment of the regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups is followed.

Communications center operators and Incident Command System (ICS) Communications Unit Leaders (COML) shall receive initial training and periodic refresher training on the use of this procedure.